

3. An imaging stylet comprising a malleable stylet having a longitudinal axis and a proximal end and a distal end;

a flexible image guide having a longitudinal axis and a proximal end and a distal end, said image guide being connected to said stylet such that a portion of said image guide runs parallel to a portion of said stylet along the longitudinal axis of said stylet and such that distal end of said image guide is co-extensive with the distal end of said stylet;

at least one flexible illumination fiber having a proximal end and a distal end, said illumination fiber being connected to said stylet such that a portion of said illumination fiber runs parallel to a portion of said stylet along the longitudinal axis of said stylet and such that the distal end of said illumination fiber is co-extensive with the distal end of said stylet; and

a removable sheath having a longitudinal axis and at least one open end, said sheath disposed around the distal ends of said stylet, said image guide, and said illumination fiber such that the longitudinal axis of said sheath substantially coincides with or is parallel with the longitudinal axis of said stylet.

4. An imaging stylet according to claim 3, wherein said sheath is adapted to isolate the distal end of said image guide from the inside of a body, and wherein said sheath comprises a transparent end portion at its distal end through which an image from the inside of a body can be received by the distal end of said image guide.

5. A device for viewing an interior surface of a body, comprising:

a sheath adapted for use with a fiber-optic imaging device, the fiber-optic imaging device comprising an image guide that has a distal end for receiving an image of a surface from the interior of a body and a proximal tip that remains outside of the body, said sheath comprising an elongated, flexible tube having a proximal end, a distal end, and an interior area adapted to be occupied by at least a distal portion of an image guide, said tube adapted to isolate the distal end of the image guide from the inside of a body, said tube comprising a transparent end portion at its distal end through which an image from the inside of a body can be received by the distal end of an image guide positioned inside said tube; and at least one illumination fiber having a proximal end and a distal end, said illumination fiber attached to said tube such that the distal end of said illumination fiber is positioned at the distal end of said tube; and

a flexible image guide having a distal end for receiving an image of a surface from the interior of a body and a proximal tip that remains outside of the body, the distal end of said image guide disposed within said tube.

6. The device of claim 5, wherein said image guide is plastic.

7. The device of claim 5, wherein said sheath is further adapted to receive a stylet, such that when a stylet is positioned within said sheath, the longitudinal axis of the stylet is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said tube.

8. The device of claim 5, further comprising a malleable stylet, said stylet attached to said tube such that the longitudinal axis of said stylet is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said tube.

9. The device of claim 7, further comprising a malleable stylet positioned within said sheath.

10. The device of claim 7, wherein said image guide is plastic.

11. The device of claim 8, wherein said image guide is plastic.

12. The device of claim 9, wherein said image guide is plastic.

13. A sheath adapted for use with a fiber-optic imaging device, the fiber-optic imaging device comprising an image guide that has a distal end for receiving an image of a surface from the interior of a body and a proximal tip that remains outside of the body, said sheath comprising:

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an elongated, flexible tube having a proximal end, a distal end, and an interior area adapted to be occupied by at least a distal portion of an image guide, said tube adapted to isolate the distal end of the image guide from the inside of a body, said tube comprising a transparent end portion at its distal end through which an image from the inside of a body can be received by the distal end of an image guide positioned inside said tube; and

at least one illumination fiber having a proximal end and a distal end, said illumination fiber attached to said tube such that the distal end of said illumination fiber is positioned at the distal end of said tube.

14. The sheath according to claim 13, wherein said sheath is further adapted to receive a stylet, such that when a stylet is positioned within said sheath, the longitudinal axis of the stylet is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said tube.

15. The sheath according to claim 13, further comprising a malleable stylet, said stylet attached to said tube such that the longitudinal axis of said stylet is substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said tube.

Remarks

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account 19-0065 any fees under 37 CFR 1.16 or 1.17 as required by this paper.